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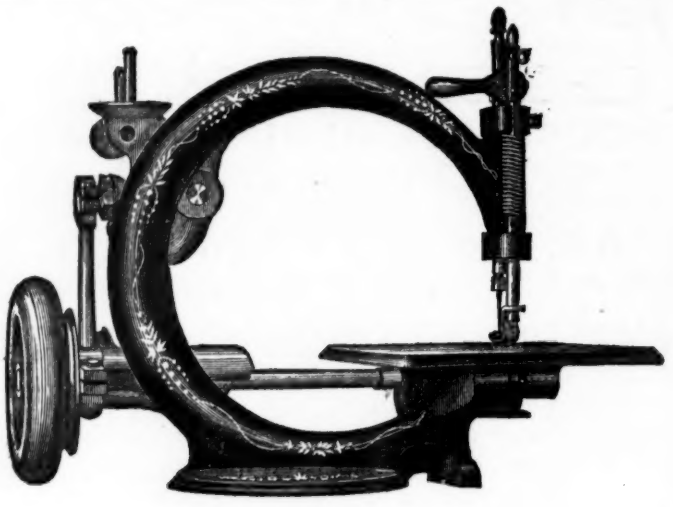

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[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

THE TOWNLEYS.

THE Townleys, of Townley Hall, in the neighbourhood of Burnley, are well known to be old among the oldest of Lancashire families, and if certain fond genealogies could be believed, theirs would be an antiquity almost unexampled in England. To be able to boast of an ancestor that came over with the Conqueror, satisfies the cravings of the most ambitious pretenders to length of lineage. But the Townley "pedigree," or, rather, one Townley pedigree, takes us back to the time of King Alfred himself, and finds the founder of the family in a certain Spartlingus, a contemporary of that memorable monarch, said to be the first of those singular Deans of Whalley, half-lay, half-clerical, who were at the same time incumbents and lords of the manor, transmitting from father to son both a spiritual and a temporary jurisdiction. However this may be, and whether his descent from Spartlingus is accepted or not, pretty certainly one "Geoffrey the elder" received "the vill of Tunleia" from his father-in-law, Roger de Lacey, "between the years 1193 and 1211." A female descendant of this Geoffrey, a "Cecilia de Thonley," married, "about 4 Edward III.," a Del Legh, and their posterity took her name, with the lands of which she had come to be the heiress. From this Dame Cecilia have sprung all the Lancashire Townleys. The seat of the main branch of the family, Townley Hall, is still in the domain which Roger de Lacey gave to Geoffrey the elder in the days of bad King John. It stands among noble woods of ancient oak, overlooking ample greensward, and itself overlooked by hills behind—a venerable pile, with many later additions and alterations—towered, buttressed, and showing on one side thick walls of rude masonry, indicating a great antiquity. It is just the place which Sir Walter Scott would have delighted to describe, discoursing the while on the fortunes of its successive owners, of whose portraits it contains an unbroken series from the time of good Queen Bess almost to our own.

The first Townley mentioned in general or local history is Sir Richard, said to have been "knighted by Lord Stanley, at Hatton Field, in Scotland, 1481," and of whom little more than this has been recorded. Of his son, Sir John, who was "Sheriff of Lancashire from 23rd to 32nd Henry VIII.," some more or less curious and copious notices survive. An active, acquisitive, long-lived knight, he increased the family estates by purchase and otherwise. It was he who enclosed the park of Hapton, then the largest in Lancashire, Knowsley excepted, and who built the domestic chapel at Townley. It is of him and the Townley Hall of his day that there is this brief record in Leland's Itinerary:—"Within a good mile or I came to Worksop, I rode through a parke of Mr. Towne's, a knyghte for ye most part abyding in Lancastershyre; and in this parke is a very praty little house," which no doubt owed much of its "pratyness" to Sir John. Eager in getting and improving, Sir John was otherwise a thrifty man, and did not care, as would seem, to spend money on that which profited him not directly. In the course of the Norroy's visitation in 1530, he paid a visit of business to Sir John at Townley Hall, and came away far from satisfied with his reception and treatment. "I made no great inquisition," quoth the worthy herald (with his spelling modernized) of Sir John, "for he would have no note taken of him, saying that there was no more gentlemen in Lancashire but my Lord of Derby and Monteagle." Evidently Sir John either had not heard of or did not believe in the descent from Spartlingus *temp.* Alfred the Great. "I sought him," says Norroy in continuation, "all day, riding in that wild country, and his reward was 2s., which the guide had the most part, and I had as evil a journey as ever I had," in this pursuit of heraldic knowledge under difficulties. It was the enclosing zeal of this practical and penurious Sir John that in all probability gave rise to the legend, long rife among the peasantry of the district, that the spirit of a Townley of Townley was doomed to wander over his old domains, exclaiming, dolefully and remorsefully:

Lay out, lay out
Horelaw and Hollingley Clough.

"By 'lay out,'" adds Dr. Whitaker, the historian of Whalley, "is meant the reverse of *take in*, to throw open, that is, or disappropriate." The sleek clerical gentleman speaks, too, of the legend as due to "the malice" as well as "the superstition" of "the common people." But, as according to Doctor Whitaker's subsequent own showing, the enclosure of Horelaw was clearly an illegal encroachment, Sir John got off very easily, with no other punishment than that inflicted by a posthumous legend. The reverend doctor, snug and cozy in his comfortable vicarage, could not of course understand the bitterness with which poor sixteenth century Lancashire peasants saw their old liberties of commonage and pasturage abridged by the high-handed and probably hard-hearted Knights of Townley.

Sir John lived to see his grandson and heir, Sir Richard Townley (knighted at the Siege of Leith), wed the heiress of the Lincolnshire Wimbishes, one of the many marriages by which the Townleys have added to their possessions. Verging on seventy, Sir John died about 1539, a year or two after the suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace, participation in which he had skilfully avoided, thus escaping the ruin in which that insurrectionary protest against the suppression of monasteries involved many of his friends. The Reformation had come, or was coming. The Townleys, of Townley Hall, like many other old Lancashire families, clung to the ancient creed, and remain (presumably) Roman Catholics to this day. As a natural consequence, they adhered, more or less conspicuously, to the House of Stuart—from the first assault on it by the Long Parliament, to the final extinction of its hopes on the field of Culloden. When simple recusancy was penal, the Townleys did not flinch from the consequences or abandon their faith. The encloser of Horelaw had left orders in his will for "100 masses of the five wounds of our Lord to be said for his soul." The John who was Townley of Townley a hundred and fifty years afterwards had to suffer severely for the assertion of his belief in the efficacy of masses. In Doctor Whitaker's day, there hung in the library of Townley Hall a portrait of this persevering and persecuted papist, to which was affixed a contemporary inscription, containing a brief and pointed biography, if not autobiography, of the original. A curious memorial it is of an old and now scarcely conceivable past. "This John," so ran the record written in the year of the insurrection and execution of Essex (and of which, too, the spelling is here modernized), "This John about the sixth or seventh year of her Majesty that now is, for professing the Apostolic Catholic Roman faith, was imprisoned first in Chester Castle, then sent to Marshalsea, then to York Castle, then to the Blockhouses in Hull, then to the Gatehouse in Westminster, then to Manchester, then to Broughton in Oxfordshire, then twice to Ely in Cambridgeshire, and so now of 73 years old and blind, is bound to appear and keep within five miles of Townley his house, who hath since the statute of '23 paid in to the Exchequer £20 the month, and doth still; [so] that there is paid already above £5,000. 1601." There is a certain pathos in these "short and simple annals" of the imprisonments of poor John Townley, "old and blind." Yet, despite their unflinching adherence to dangerous and desperate causes, the Townleys seem to have escaped all along anything like confiscation of their estates, in Lancashire at least. So far they have been more fortunate than several families of the same county and of the same tenacity of opinion.

Charles and Christopher, two of the grandsons of this much-suffering John, were the first of the family to achieve a certain reputation out of the sphere of mere Lancashire squirism, and irrespectively of loyalty to unsuccessful causes, religious and political. Charles was the friend and correspondent of Crabtree, who was the friend and correspondent of Jeremiah Horrocks, and the Royalist and Roman Catholic squire of Townley Hall thus belonged to the remarkable little group of astronomical and scientific observers and students in the northern counties, the members of which were busy with their tranquil pursuits on the outbreak of the great civil war of the seventeenth century. Charles Townley's younger brother, Christopher, took to antiquarianism rather than to science. He was the friend and co-adjutor of Dr. Kuerden, whose MS. collections are so well known and so often referred to,

and in conjunction with whom he planned a history of Lancashire—never completed. Some thirty volumes of Christopher's collections are now at Townley; and they yielded a great deal of fruit to Dr. Whitaker when compiling his history of Whalley; though, after the death of their original compiler, his worldly goods coming to be inventoried and appraised, they were put down as "several manuscripts, valued at 11s."—such being the slender estimate formed in 1674 of the value of poor Christopher's life-long labours towards a history of his native county. Christopher died quietly in his bed years after the restoration of his majesty Charles II. The doom of his scientific elder brother, the squire of Townley, was a bloody one. When the civil war broke out, Charles Townley was foremost among the loyalist Lancashire squires who joined the royal standard. In an official account of the famous storm of Preston, in the February of 1643, "Master Townley of Townley" is described as having "escaped narrowly;" and among the ladies who were then taken prisoners was his wife. He escaped from Preston only to find a soldier's death two years later in the fiercely-contested battle of Marston Moor, when Lieutenant-General Cromwell put to flight Prince Rupert and the flower of the cavaliers.

Generations passed away, and a Hanoverian king occupied the throne of the Stuarts, but still the Townleys were true to the cause of hereditary right. Twenty-two years after the Charles Townley, who fell on Marston Moor, narrowly escaped with his life from the storm of Preston, a young great-grandson of his, Richard by name, the squire of the Townley Hall of that day, fighting, or ready to fight for the Stuarts, was among the Jacobites beleagured in the very same town by the forces of his Majesty George the First. This was during the Derwentwater Rising, sometimes dignified with the appellation of "the Rebellion of 1715." The movements of King George's troops were directed from a distance by the great Duke of Marlborough, from whose eyes the tears of dotage had not yet begun to flow, and "proud" Preston, skilfully invested, was surrendered by the rebels. Richard Townley, of Townley, was one of the captured and the tried. It was proved that he had raised a body of men called Townley's troop, quite a family affair, since the coachman, butler, and postillion of Townley Hall were enrolled in it. But he was fortunate in being tried after Derwentwater and scores of other Jacobites had been condemned and executed. The London jury who had to deal with him were tired of convictions and hangings. They accepted his plea that he had been forced into the "rebellion," and acquitted him through sheer good-nature, a piece of lenity for which they were sternly rebuked by the presiding judge. Some of the Townleys seem to have profited by this lesson. Thirty years later there was the much more promising, or threatening rebellion of 1745, and of course there was a Townley in it, but not this time a Townley of Townley Hall. The Townley who escaped the gallows in 1715 was dead, and his son and heir kept quiet during the rebellion of 1745. It was his uncle Francis who became colonel of the two hundred men honoured by the name of the "Manchester regiment," on joining the standard of Charles Edward, when he appeared in our city in the November of 1745, on which occasion his adherents enforced in Manchester "illuminations and demonstrations of joy." After Culloden, Colonel Townley, and several of the officers and men of his regiment, were tried, found guilty, and executed on Kensington Common in the July of 1746. "The heads of Colonel Townley and Captain George Fletcher," one of the officers of the Manchester regiment, "were placed upon Temple Bar, but the heads of all the other prisoners were preserved in spirits, and sent into the country, to be placed in public situations in Manchester or Carlisle." So ended the rebellion of 1745, and with it the part played by the Townley family in political affairs. The Stuart cause was gone for ever, and the Townleys had to content themselves with clinging to the religious creed of King Alfred and Spartlingus.

Two Townleys now remain to be spoken of before this "abstract and brief chronicle" of the sayings and doings of this notable Lancashire family can be closed. John, an elder brother of the last and ill-fated Jacobite beheaded on Kensington Common, was born at Townley in 1697. A cadet of a Jacobite and Roman Catholic family, he entered the French army, and was serving under Marshal Berwick when that illegitimate son of James II. and Arabella Churchill, the great Marlborough's sister, was killed at the siege of Philipsburgh. He became a Knight of St. Louis, and probably spent in Paris, and in the best society, most of his later life—a long one, for he died at the ripe age of 85. The story runs thus:—Being in company with Voltaire, he heard the French wit declare that it was impossible to turn *Hudibras* into French so as to preserve in the translation any of the peculiar wit and humour of the original. Thereupon, it is said, John Townley tried his hand on a translation of detached passages, and with such satisfaction to himself that he completed a rendering of the whole work. Except in this vague tradition, however, there is no mention anywhere of an acquaintance between Voltaire and Townley. The probability is that if any external hint did incite Townley to his singular task, he found it in Voltaire's famous *Letters on England*, in which the versatile Frenchman criticises *Hudibras* after his peculiar fashion, pronounces it to be neither translatable nor worth translating, and gives a French rhymed version of his own of the first four hundred lines of *Hudibras*, considerately, as he deems Butler to be a tedious poet, condensing them into eighty. But whatever the origin of Townley's translation of *Hudibras*, executed it was, and published in 1757. It has always been deemed a marvel of translation; and when extracts from it were first printed in England, the reviewers of the day refused to believe in the existence of the version as a whole, and pronounced the news of its publication to be a hoax.

Last, but far from least in our catalogue of the Townleys, comes the originator of the sculpture-gallery which bears his name, and by which this will be preserved while the British Museum exists. Charles Townley of Townley, born there in 1737, was a grandson of the lucky Richard who escaped the gallows in 1716, and his mother was the daughter and heiress of Ralph Standish of Standish, the representative of another ancient Roman Catholic and Lancashire house. Inheriting the family creed with the family estates, Charles Townley was educated at the famous Romish seminary of Douai, whence he went to Paris, where he entered society under the auspices of his uncle, the translator of *Hudibras*. Such was the effect of this long training in France, that late in life he felt it difficult, he used to avow, to express himself with as much ease in English as in French. During the course of a tour in Italy, Charles Townley made the acquaintance of Sir William Hamilton, afterwards the husband of Nelson's Lady Hamilton, then English minister at Naples, and in his and other similar society the Lancashire squire was smitten by a passion for the collection of antiques, in days, too, when there was still a rich harvest of them to be reaped by exploration and excavation. Between 1768 and 1778 he had accumulated, by real labour and enterprise, not merely by signing cheques, a great part of the noble collection now in the British Museum, and which with others there and elsewhere has done so much for art and for our æsthetic appreciation of the antique world. Townley was no mere collector. He enjoyed with the utmost zest the exquisite objects of which he became possessed; and in his house in Park Street, Westminster, they were so arranged, with such accompaniments, "that the interior of a Roman villa might be inspected in our own metropolis." While cultivating these exotic tastes he did not neglect Townley Hall, where he regularly spent some of the summer months of every year, adorning its grounds and forwarding the interests of his tenantry. Though lavish in his expenditure on the beautiful and the useful, he was personally frugal, and is said never even to have kept a carriage. Dignified, amiable, cheerful, accomplished, uniting to a care for his tenantry and the poor of his estate a sp'endid cultivation of the beautiful, the figure of Charles Townley appeals to the imagination almost as that of an ideal English gentleman of the eighteenth century. He died in 1805, and so left his collections that they were acquired by the nation for the comparatively trifling sum of £20,000. The contents of the Townley Gallery are now among the most valuable and valued art-treasures of the British Museum. In a general way, our county is thought of chiefly as one which has made important contributions to machinery and manufactures. It is pleasant to remember that for the enjoyment of such works of art as the Capitoline Venus and the other beautiful and noble sculptures which compose the Townley Gallery, the thanks of the nation are due to the taste, energy, and enterprise of a Lancashire Worthy.

THE SEXES.—Miss Becker says there are two—the Fair sex and the Uufair sex.

MANCHESTER DINNERS.

3.—RESTAURANTS.

IF any of our readers wants to make a fortune we think we can give him a wrinkle. All he has to do is to take a suitable building, open it as a restaurant, and supply for dinners, in addition to what is usually offered at such places, a variety of vegetables beyond the eternal potato and the equally eternal cabbage, at reasonable charges, and be content with a moderate profit—say 100 per cent on the things sold—and also supply something else under the head of fish beyond soles and cod. We are not mistaken in saying the attempt would succeed beyond the most sanguine expectations. For really the dinners as supplied at restaurants in Manchester professing to be of the best class, are absurdly dear, and have a sameness about them which is most wearisome. In the shape of fish your choice lies invariably between cod and sole, with, in very rare instances, eels thrown in. This is the case all the year round, salmon only being the exception when it is very cheap and capable of realizing to the dining-room proprietors a profit of about 300 per cent. In fact the opinion seems very generally to prevail that fish is an article of luxury only, and ought to be charged for accordingly. Much as might be said about fish, more might be said about vegetables. Though not quite so badly off as the peripatetic diner in London who has frequently to choose either the inevitable potato or that mess only fit for cattle, "turnip greens," we are much to be pitied. Who does not know the usual question, "Potatoes, sir? Take cabbage, sir?" that is said with the air of a man who had something new, something out of the common, to offer? Ask for cauliflower, for instance, and you are answered in the most unctuous manner imaginable. "Not got any to-day, sir!" Are the proprietors of our restaurants ignorant of the existence of such things as carrots, turnips, cauliflowers, brussels sprouts, sea kale, spinach, and preserved peas? Do they not know that celery (which is so cheap now) stewed is a most delicious adjunct to the dinner table, and that Portugal onions boiled are both toothsome and nourishing? In fact, numberless additions might be made to the list of vegetables available, and they would yield a good profit if sold at a penny a small dish full.

The Old Bank Restaurant in Market Street, an establishment under the same proprietorship as the Shades in New Brown Street, is a very desirable place on the whole, being comfortable and quiet. The dinners here are worthy of praise. One we had was very enjoyable, though we must protest against the charge of eightpence for a bowl of soup, since the dish in reality seldom contains two pennyworth. The sole was excellent—a good fish cooked to a turn. The mutton cutlets were also very good, whilst the beef was but so-so. There was a curiosity brought to us here in the shape of a jam tart—a little thing in the form of a cone, made of puff—very puff—paste with about a tenth of an ounce of jam on the top, which could have been without difficulty compressed into a lady's thimble. Happy thought—never try jam tart! The charges here are for soups, eightpence; fish, ninepence; meat or entrées, ninepence and a shilling; and sweets, threepence. The waitresses are unusually civil and attentive.

Beresford's, in Chapel-Walks, is another well-known restaurant. The would-be diner here, after pursuing a very devious course from the entrance, and mounting a flight of stairs, will find himself in a long low room with tables down each side. After taking our seat, and waiting with much expenditure of both time and patience, a condescending waiter approached, and on receiving our modest order disappeared, and whispering something (our order we presume) to a waiting maiden at the other end of the apartment, put on a look of the most perfect peace and contentment we ever saw, and straightway fell into a reverie. From this he was shortly aroused, and brought us a sole which proved to be very good and satisfactory in every respect. The potatoes were obligingly brought after a few minutes' delay, and when our sole was half consumed we were invited to take some sauce. "Better late than never," thought we, as we helped ourselves. Some sirloin of beef was also worthy of praise. The potatoes were very bad, and some cabbage looked cold—we did not get a chance of trying it. The variety here is not particularly great, there being only one soup and two fish (cod fish and sole). An apple tart was charged fourpence. The charge for fish alone is 1s. 3d., and the charge for meat alone is 1s. 6d., yet a diner may have both fish and meat for 1s. 9d., only 3d. more than if he took meat alone, and the quantities are much the same when taken together or separately. How is that arranged, we wonder, to the proprietor's satisfaction? The waiting done here by men is very bad, infinitely worse than the waiting at more unpretentious places done by women.

The dining-room of Mee's, at the corner of Tib Lane and Market Street, is a curiously-shaped place—long, narrow, tortuous, and partitioned off into small boxes and recesses; but it is none the less comfortable on that account. Strange that Englishmen should be so fond of dining alone! The prices here, *a la carte*, are—fish, sixpence, and worth it too; meat, tenpence, and sweets threepence. A dinner of fish, meat, pastry, cheese, and celery, costs one and tenpence, including vegetables and bread. The meat was of the average, both as to quality and quantity; a sweet combination of bread and butter, currants, and so forth, called a "blackcap pudding," was particularly toothsome, and said "come again." We did not, however, but went on to the cheese and celery, finding the cheese horrible, and the celery crisp and good.

We have notes of many other places—the Arcade, the Gresham, Studd's, Dan's, the Freemasons', the Albion, and half-a-dozen more—but the examples we have given must suffice. Restaurants in Manchester are very like Dr. Johnson's green fields—when you have seen one you have seen all. There appears to be very little inventive genius on the part of the proprietors, and there is a sameness about the several places that is certainly not a characteristic of dining-rooms, say in London. One innovator, however, has lately appeared, who, if he is not spoiled by success, will at any rate have shown us how restaurants may almost rival the comforts and elegance of home. Mr. Hiley's dining-room, in Gladstone Buildings, is exceedingly handsome; the appointments are choice; the food is very good; and the waiting admirable. The charges are, perhaps, a trifle higher than those we have specially noticed, but the difference in price is amply compensated for by the general excellence.

LANCASHIRE FOLK.

MANCHESTER may be said only recently to have been admitted into the pale of civilization. It is not very long since this district generally was looked upon as a sort of unknown country. King William the Fourth, when Dr. Dalton was presented to him, asked him if Lancashire was quiet, just as he might have inquired about the condition of some distant colony. When Beau Brummell heard that his regiment was ordered to Manchester he immediately sold out. His friend, the Prince of Wales, would have been rather astonished had he known that a successor of his would be present at the marriage of a Manchester belle in Westminster Abbey, and Manchester was patronized and looked upon as a sort of beehive, very useful for the production of honey, but rather dangerous under some circumstances. Now we have marquises and earls coming down and discussing matters of trade with manufacturers and merchants. We suppose there are not many Londoners to whom the features of the Queen were not familiar even before the days of photographs, but when Her Majesty came to Manchester there was as much fuss made as when the Duke of Edinburgh went to India. It must have been a novel pleasure to the Queen when she contrasted her progress from Buckingham Palace to St. James's with her progress to Peel Park. In the one case, under ordinary circumstances, the loungers would content themselves with raising their hats; in the other, industrious Manchester was ready to give itself up to holiday-making and loyalty. But Lancashire people are coolly critical and practical, and not overawed by greatness. The Queen was pronounced to be a "tidy-looking little wench," and the Prince Consort was pronounced by the ladies "a gradely clever chap, barring his upper-lip, which was vast fou'." The beard and moustache are not such strange objects now. Manchester will doubtless become less and less provincial, but will never be a copy of London. It will be the metropolis of a district which in its wealth and influence is first in England. It will always be local in feeling, and men of moderate position and habits will be generally known. In London, all but a few are swallowed up in the vast ocean of oblivion.

If the study of the character and habits of the wealthier classes in this district has been a curious one, the hard-headed simplicity of the poorer would be found amusing in the extreme. They are essentially matter-of-fact. A young clergyman exhorted a dying weaver: "Set

thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." The reply was, "Well, I think it's o' reet, but for a brick as is out behint that cupboard." A Manchester clergyman, who called upon a patient after a visit to Oldham, found her very impassive, and tried to rouse her with a glowing description of the New Jerusalem, as pourtrayed in the Apocalypse. She said, "Eh, for sure, and dud ye see o' that at Owdham? I'zowks, but it mon ha' bin grand! I wish I'd bin wi' ye." A Rochdale clergyman was about to baptize a child in his district, and learnt that the parents had failed to provide a name, leaving it to his discretion. He proposed to call the child William, "after his most gracious majesty;" but when he was going away he heard a loud shout—"Hollow! yo mun come back; yo mun do it o'er agi-an; it's a wench!" Rochdale manners are somewhat remarkable. On one occasion a lad said to a friend—"Heigh, Jack, do'st know that felly on th' grey tit?" "Noa," was the reply. "Then," said the other, "clod a stean at him." In many Lancashire towns a popular impression prevails that a man is perfectly justified in beating his wife, and it would be considered an unconstitutional thing to interfere when a husband was exercising a little wholesome severity. Where clogs are worn, and brooms and pokers are at hand, this sort of thing sometimes leads to awkward results, especially when Mr. Justice Brett is on the Northern Circuit. A year or so ago a man struck at his wife with such violence that he killed the infant in her arms. The Court was so affected at the thought of the poor man's bereavement, that he was let off with a nominal punishment. If he had killed both wife and child, the Court would logically have had to award him money from the poor box.

We believe that the sharp looking, bustling, knowing Londoner is often sadly taken in when he comes to deal for the first time with a blunt Lancastrian or stolid Yorkshireman, and finds to his sorrow what a large amount of natural shrewdness, of capacity for viewing things from every point, and weighing them at their exact value, there is in their natures. With all the virtues and intellectual vigour of the northern population, we would willingly see a little less of that hardness and apparent rudeness which no doubt often covers an honest and tender heart.

STAGE-COACH PASSENGERS' ASSURANCE CO.

It is surprising how few inquiries people make when they insure, but generally take for granted all that the agent tells them. Latterly some severe lessons have been taught, but we are inclined to think that insurers will go on taking things very much for granted and giving themselves very little trouble about the matter—THE SPHINX.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I was very much struck with the truth of the above sentence, which appeared in your excellent article on Insurance Agents, of Saturday, December 10th. For the benefit of your readers, and all others intending to insure, I will relate my own experience. A near relative of mine died a short time ago; he was insured in a so-called very respectable office. I gave notice of his death in the usual way; every possible impediment and annoyance was placed in the way of my receiving the money. First, I had to get a form filled up and sworn to by the doctor who dispatched him. Next I had to bring the parson to make a solemn affirmation as to having buried him. Then I had to prove my own identity, although the office dispensed with any such form when I paid the fees, which I had been in the habit of doing for years, and the agent knew me thoroughly well. After all these preliminaries I was told I must wait three months from the date of their proof in order to receive—what? Why, far less money than my relative had paid into the office; and when I did eventually get it, they parted with it as if each sovereign was a director's tooth.

For very many years I have subscribed to—we will say—the Stage Coach Passengers' Assurance Company; Mr. Victuals, secretary. This company agrees for three guineas a year to pay £1000 in case of sudden death, and so many guineas a week in case of disability arising from an accident. During that time many trivial misfortunes I have passed over without claim, and paid my annual fees with religious confidence; but, unfortunately, a few months ago I met with a severe accident, which quite disabled one of my legs. I was utterly unable to pursue my avocation, which is of an active character, but I managed to drive to and from my business, and sit with my leg up all day in my office, in order to dictate letters or answer questions. I fully explained my accident and position to the Company, and claimed £10 as compensation—not a tenth of what I lost through the accident. I received a formidable affidavit paper, on which I had to fill up all particulars. My doctor had also to make his statement. Then I had to get an eye-witness to affirm what he knew about it. Next I received a visit from the Company's doctor, who put me through a severe examination. Having satisfied every reasonable demand, I now fully expected my £10, instead of which I received a note saying I was not entitled to any compensation, because I had been to my business instead of laying up at home; but if I would send another £7 they would entertain my claim under the partially-disabled insurance clause. By this time I had had quite enough of this vaunted insurance honour, and I naturally declined to part with another £7 for the remote chance of getting £3, and I thought it cheaper to pay for my own doctor's bill and the elastic bandages, which I have to wear to this day.

If this had been a voucher from a despised betting man it would have been met without a moment's hesitation, even if for thousands; but an established assurance office, which only lays the odds against accident, death, or fire for an annually repeated stake, can afford to quibble and repudiate. Which is the more honourable, the man who bets against a horse, or the legalized office which lays against your death? Both systems are founded on the mathematical calculations of chance. As far as my experience goes, give me the former.—Yours truly,

A VICTIM.

Dec. 13th, 1870.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE LATE MR. FREDERICK YOUNGE.

IT is very satisfactory to find the statement of the *Times* that Mr. Younge had left his wife and family destitute authoritatively denied. We hope that this announcement will put a summary stop to the proposed benefit performance suggested by Mr. Pond. These benefit performances are much too frequent. All the grace is taken out of them, as well as much of the profit, by the repetition of them upon all sorts of unnecessary occasions. It is a strange thing that actors should take their place amongst cabmen and accept gratuities from the public. There is something derogatory in a benefit, and the prevalence of these occasions show that the profession of acting is yet far distant from being that gentlemanly calling which it ought to be. There is, to our mind, something revolting in a man of Mr. Sothern's means and position taking two nights out of every twelve for what he calls his benefit. When an actor dies and leaves his family in want, it is another thing. If he has done for them all that lay in his power whilst he was alive a benefit becomes a graceful as well as a useful tribute to his memory. But such performances ought to be sacred to such occasions as this. They ought not to be suffered to desecrate themselves and the profession by its members always being treated, and treating themselves as dependent on public almsgiving. No man of gentlemanly feeling would submit to it, unless in actual want. In the case of the family of Mr. Younge it would be a piece of bad taste almost amounting to an insult.

PUBLIC READERS AND READING.

Mr. George Evans, well-known to the frequenters of the Athenæum as an accomplished reader, gave a miscellaneous reading at the Hulme Town Hall on Monday night last. His selection was very varied, ranging in character from the intense pathos of *Enoch Arden* to the wild farce of "Love in a Balloon," and "Major Namby." Mr. Evans's presence is good, and—though for a reader the room does not possess the best acoustic properties—his voice and enunciation are clear and distinct. His readings evinced care, intelligence, and considerable ability; whether reciting Tennyson's terribly sad story, or, the little domestic eccentricities of the martial major, he never lost the careful and appreciative attention of the audience. Avoiding noise and rant, his efforts were quiet and self-contained, and yet not wanting in power when necessary. Manchester now possesses several public readers of more than average ability—most of whom are amateurs or non-professionals—and public readings are a fairly popular form of entertainment. It has

occurred to us that much more good would be done, as well as greater pleasure given, by the formation of classes for the promotion of proficiency in reading than by these desultry public displays. So far as they tend to make the art of reading attractive and extend the love of literature, they are worthy of praise, but there is no easily attainable art which is less generally practised, or which is better fitted for the fireside at home than the art of reading, and the accomplished teacher who increased the number of good readers would be doing a really serviceable and useful work.

PICTURE SALES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

The artists have no reason to be particularly well satisfied with the result of this year's exhibition at the Royal Institution. It has been a poor season, both actually and relatively. Thus, the pictures sold last year numbered more than a hundred, and the sum received for them was nearly £2,000. This year, only seventy-eight have found purchasers, and the aggregate amount is only £1,077. 10s. Of this sum, £835 was for oil-paintings, and £241. 10s. for water-colour drawings. The principal sales were:—

		£	s.	d.
Turning the Drove	H. Garland	150	0	0
Catching at Smoke	J. Gow	60	0	0
Peel Harbour	H J. Holding	50	0	0
A Venetian Romance	W M. Egley	40	0	0
On Holmwood Common	J. Peel	32	0	0
Early Spring—Sowing Mangold	J. E. Newton	31	10	0
View near Trefrw	R. Redfern	26	5	0
Near Dolgelly	E. G. Müller	26	5	0
The Peak Rocks, Cornwall	J. Squire	25	0	0
Trebarwith Strand, Cornwall	A. B. Collier	21	0	0
Evening	J R Dicksee	21	0	0
Waiting for Confession	W. Holyoake	20	0	0
Janette	Miss G. Swift	20	0	0
Mumbles—Oyster Boats Returning	G. S. Walters	20	0	0
Sea and Shore	E. M. Bancroft, A M.A.	15	15	0
On the Wye, at Ross	J. Squire	15	0	0
Twickenham	A. De Breanski	15	0	0
Rain	J. W. Hayne	14	14	0
Evening near Capel Curig	F. Muschamp	14	0	0
Mill Stream, Rowaley	L. C. Livett, M.A.A.	12	12	0
Hide and Seek	S. M'Cloy	12	12	0
Brook in North Wales	P. Deakin	12	12	0
A Dead Thrush	Miss H. Coleman	12	12	0

Apart from the loan pictures, and the portraits and other works painted on commission, about four hundred and twenty works remain unsold, and will have to be returned to their authors. Among these are the Catapult, by Mr. E. J. Poynter, A.R.A.; the Heywood prize picture; and Mr. Shield's Solomon Eagle.

BOYS' REFUGE AND INDUSTRIAL BRIGADE.

We are requested by the secretary of this institution to contradict the rumour mentioned in our pages that it was in contemplation to transform its boys into a brigade of crossing sweeps. We are very glad to hear that all the boys under the care of the establishment are provided with a higher order of work; and we have much pleasure in being assured of the incorrectness of the report that so dreadful and organized a nuisance was to be inflicted on the town.

A PLAGUE OF TWINS.

It was with infinite horror that we noted in the *City News* of last week two several cases of the repeated and systematic production of twins. In one case the interesting phenomenon had occurred some six or seven times, and in the other no less than sixteen! Such people really ought to emigrate. In an overworked old country like this they are nothing short of a calamity. We sincerely hope that there are not symptoms of an approaching epidemic of twins. We can imagine nothing more dreadful than a plague of twins. And whilst upon this subject, we shall be much obliged to anybody who will have the goodness to inform us why it is that the people who have twins are invariably those who are least able to afford them.

AN ARTIST'S PROTEST AGAINST PHILISTINISM.

Mr. W. P. Burton has resigned his membership of the Old Water Colour Society as well as Mr. E. Burne Jones, whose secession we announced some months ago. The cause is the same—the withdrawal of one of Mr. Jones's pictures from the last exhibition, a proceeding which Mr. Burton declines to sanction. The Society can ill afford to lose either. Mr. Burne Jones's wonderfully rich and delicate sense of harmony attracted even those who most objected to the doctrines of his school. Mr. Burton exhibited so little that his loss will not be felt in the same degree; but as an artist he stands quite as high in the estimation of the general public, and his absence will seriously diminish the attractiveness of the gallery.

THE WILD ROCKING HORSE:

OR THE BOUNDING STEED OF THE PRAIRIE PANTOMIME.

INTRODUCTION.

AS it is necessary that at this festive season we should be guilty of some extravagance, we have gone to the expense of engaging a young man from the country to write a short pantomime. All the experienced young men in town having been bought up at an immense outlay by Mr. Calvert, Mr. Knowles, and Mr. Egan—as much as a portemonaie having been given in one instance as an honorarium for literary labour, and a free pass in the other, terminable after four years and then available for the pit for the remainder of the man's life—we were compelled ourselves to go into the country districts, and so we went. We had not been there long (it was the district of Facit, near Rochdale, not Facit per alium but Facit per se, well-known as about the only part of this see in which our pleasant, rosy-faced Bishop has not made a speech) when a young man with a literary turn about his eye, which apparently wanted to get across the bridge of his nose and to fight the other eye (the fact is, he squinted), passed the window of the hotel in which we were drin——, that is, studying the dying embers of a constitution enfeebled with liquor. There was in the appearance of this young man so much of the literary afflatus—his red hair was so blown about his forehead—that we sent a casual boy after him to say that we desired the pleasure of his company at the "Silent Cuckoo." That was the name of the public-house. In a few minutes his lips were put freely to the modest pipkin of gin and water, to which, as a preliminary, we had entreated him. We asked him if he could write a short pantomime, and he said he thought he could, but he had never tried.

"Have you ever *seen* one?" was our second question.

"No!" he rejoined, in a voice which shook the rafters of the "Silent Cuckoo," though not offensively.

"Then you're the man for us," was the remark with which we closed with him.

The only remuneration we ever permit to the pantomime writer for this paper is a Ham. This, the young man had heard from the mouth of public rumour. The sole question, therefore, was, whether he would receive the Ham concrete or in detail in the form of the mayoral sandwich used at the School Board. At mention of the latter refreshment the manner of the young man became so threatening, and his face so flushed, either with suppressed emotion or suppressed diction, or both, that we changed the subject by offering him one of our office cigars—a variety of the fragrant weed which we keep for correspondents, and which is guaranteed to render a man rigid and powerless in five minutes. That interval is supposed to have elapsed, and the young man having come to his senses and to another pipkin of gin and water, which was renewed at frequent intervals during the afternoon, he bid us take pen, ink, and paper, and without any pause beyond an occasional one to enable him to go out and look for a dog, which he said was waiting for him, but which could not abide the smell of a bar parlour, he dictated, word for word, the following

PANTOMIME.

THE TAME ONE.

It is possible, my little boys, and also you, ye little girls, that you may

never have heard of the wild Rocking Horse. Of wild honey and wild roses, of eglantine wild and wild beasts, meaning bears and lions, and the chimpanzee, you have heard, but never, no never, of the wild Rocking Horse. But I am sure you know, and have frequently enjoyed the company of, the tame Rocking Horse, which Man, the king of beasts, has broken to the bit and bridle, but deprived of the power of champing or snorting like Leviathan. You have, no doubt, been taken by your great and good Papa to see the tame Rocking Horse in his stable at Mr. Henry's in King Street, at the famous agricultural show which the Civet Cat always holds at this period of the year, and you will have been struck with the silent energy which a group of these interesting creatures displays; how they always are saddled and bridled ready, if anything should happen, and opening their mouths as if about to have their ages ascertained by Mr. Lawson. You must have observed Mr. Henry, or his intelligent assistant, take out the tails of these animals at pleasure and put them in again without a wink on the part of the horse, in order to show that there is no danger to the most timid rider. If your great and good papa has had the command of his own pecuniary resources, without the thoughtful intervention of your great and good mamma, you will probably have had the satisfaction of seeing the tame Rocking Horse arriving at your house in the afternoon in a cart, pulling faces at the live horse who drew the cart as little better than a stupid ass for doing so. At all events, I hope this may be the happy lot of many of you this Christmas, and when you have mounted your steed, and are playing at Mazeppa, or coming off with a cracker on your head, think, if only for a moment, of him who now writes these lines, and whose only remuneration for his trouble is a modest Ham.

THE WILD ONE.

It was a boundless and a bounding or undulating prairie. Flocks of prairie fowl flew over-head; carpets of prairie flowers bloomed under foot. In the foreground herds of wild Rocking Horses were feeding. The old horses cropped the dewy mead, and the little foals and fillies galloped about in the enjoyment of unfettered freedom. Their conversation was "neigh, neigh," as simple as possible, just as yours is always "yea, yea," when in moments of overloaded stomach you are invited to take a little Gregory's powder. All nature smiled. It was only observed that the wild Rocking Horses were not clean and white like the tame ones, but that they had rough coats which had no gloss upon them; also that their habits were not pleasing, and that they occasionally tumbled over one another and rolled about in the mud.

In some portions of the bounding prairie there were groups of men, with lassos, stationed, who sought to catch the dirtier and more neglected of the wild Rocking Horses, so that they might be groomed and fettled, as it is called, and so that the younger horses especially might not run wild always, but be taught to rock to some purpose, and to be useful instead of merely eating and drinking and galloping and dying. The groups of lasso men, it was noticed, did very little but twiddle their lassos between their thumbs and stare first at the wild Rocking Horses and then at each other. They had different opinions about the way in which these wild things should be caught. Some declined to catch them at all, but said they looked nice in their native dirt. Others said that when they were caught, one could not tell what to do with them. Others, still, that they would only allow them to be caught with an orange lasso; and, again, there were men who said that a green rope would be the best. Occasionally the lasso men became so angry in their discussions that they threw their lassos round each other's necks and tried to strangle one another, but in this unfortunately they rarely succeeded, as many good men hoped they might have done. Meanwhile, the wild Rocking Horses galloped up and down, and lived and grew dirtier and wallowed in the mire until their numbers increased and the condition of the prairie became very serious indeed, and many loathsome diseases afflicted the wild Rocking Horses, and they infected even the lasso men with their disorders. The lasso men all said they would really now do something, and they held meetings in secluded portions of the prairie, and annoyed themselves, as the Germans say; but whenever there appeared a chance of agreement, the men with black lassos and black silk breasts, who had always made the most noise, stepped boldly in and spoiled the enterprize. Unless they could have entirely their own way they would not consent even to the smallest grooming of the wild horses. "Let us wash them and try to tame them," said some; "teach them, at all events, the comfort of being clean to begin with." But the black lassos said that bodily cleanliness unaccompanied by the 39 Nutmegs was a curse, and that a clean body without the 39 articles aforesaid would do no good, but rather evil to the wild Rocking Horses. If any man told the black lassos that they were humbugs, as many did, the black lassos offered up a silent prayer, and bit and kicked their opponents most dreadfully. The black lassos blocked the way.

Then there arose a Forrester, with long legs and a strong arm, and he said, "This here situation does me much perplesk." He knew something of the black lassos, and pretended to admire them, but he did not do so overmuch, and he made up his mind that he would circumvent them, that is to say, get behind them and trip them up. He tried to do so and failed. Some people said he failed because he was really afraid of the black lassos; and others, because the latter were too clever for him and made too much play with the 39 Nutmegs. But the Forrester with long legs, from the northern prairies, did his best, and he went to the good Queen, and asked her aid to make clean and useful the Rocking Horses which were running wild and dying. And the good Queen did *her* best, and called upon good men to help her; and every one thought that the wise work would be accomplished. But the black lassos were stronger than the Queen, and they formed themselves into a body of what are called Black Guards, who bore aloft a flag inscribed with the 39 Nutmegs, and enlisted many silly men and silly women, who like the 39 Nutmegs because they are spicy; and this body of Black Guards swore that the wild horses should only be caught with the black lassos, and that otherwise they should swallow, and wallow, and die miserably, which I am very much afraid many of them will now do. Are you not very sorry for them, and would you not like to see them at this happy time of Christmas made clean, and glossy, and useful; giving pleasure to their parents, and helping us all to enjoy ourselves?

This is all I have to say. I cannot, for one Ham as my wages, make this Pantomime come out better; and you must, therefore, not scold me. Had I received a portemonaie, or a free pass terminable after four years, I could have made arrangements for a fairy like Mr. Calvert or Mr. Knowles; but no fairy that I am acquainted with will accept a share of a Ham which, you know, like the Goose to the man of great appetite, may be too much for one, but is too little for two. If I should discover that, by next Christmas, the scheme of the big Forrester has come out better than I think it will, I promise you the production of a pleasanter Pantomime than this, even if, instead of a Ham, I get nothing at all for writing it.

A TALE WITHOUT AN END.

Thereby hangs a tale.—As You Like It.

In ancient time, a many years ago,
There reigned in a far distant heathen land
A sovereign despot, who, with pomp and show,
And bosh and bunkum, kept the reins in hand;
An average sample of the regal lumber
That doth this restless ball of earth encumber.

Of wealth he'd much, of follies he had many,
But as to common sense he hadn't any;
Such things are not the qualities of kings—
Crowned puppets, wagging as you pull their strings—
The useless fringe and frippery of a nation,
Puff'd out by parasitic adulation.
One grace, however, one bright genuine gem
Stuck in this Pagan monarch's diadem—
The Princess Diamond, his only daughter,
A diamond really of the purest water,
Of marriageable age; and he, the king,
Desir'd a husband for this fair young thing.

No end of titled donkeys, young and old,
Sniffing the bait of beauty and of gold,
Besieged the palace and in turn besought her;
Besought in vain, for neither prince nor peer,
Could gain the 'vantage of a listening ear.

Pondering this thing with grave deliberation,
And weighty pro and con consideration,
The king drew out a lengthy proclamation,
Addressed in terms distinct to all the nation,

Which, being set up in brilliant typography,
Loosish, perhaps, in matter of orthography,
But obvious in its aim and intimation,
Was posted all about the palace walls.

Thus ran the edict:—"Men of every land,
Know 'tis our sov'ran and sublime intention
So to dispose our loving daughter's hand
Upon sich terms as we proceed to mention.
Prince, peer, or peasant, only he shall hev her,
Who tells a story that shall last for ever;
And mark, this strict condition we append,
Be it our nearest or our dearest friend,
Who fails, his body from his head we sever."
This proclamation stirred, as well it might,
That restless impulse, female curiosity;
And every day, from early dawn till night,
Wagged women's tongues with wonderful velocity.
Had it been theirs the task, the waggish king,
Had found a story-teller just the thing.

A boon so great spunk'd up full many a wight.
Some boldly started, paused, and took affright.
One took a pull at whisky's potent fount,
Until Dutch courage to his brain did mount;
Thus fortified, went in, and boldly led off
A tale, broke down, and quickly had his head off.

So days went by, until at last there came
After a lengthened void, a wight, whose name
Smack'd something heathenish. They found it hard
The name to spell, it was so blotch'd and blurr'd;
'Twas written on a dog-ear'd, dirty card.
The courtiers all protested and demurred
To admit the bearer of it, but the king
Was less irresolute. "'Twould serve him right,
A guerdon for his boldness and temerity,"
Exclaimed the monarch with assumed severity,
"To show him in." The stranger entered straight.
No show of fear nor tremor in his gait.
Some six feet high he stood from toe to crown,
Had eyes of lively gray, and locks of brown;
A hooked nose above a broad moustache;
What most he seemed deficient in was cash,
Denoted by his garments, rather seedy,
Sure sign of being out of luck and needy,
Yet had a reckless look that seemed to say,
"Who cares? Not I—come when, come what, come may."

Treating the monarch to a cool survey,
His moustache twirling and with arms a-kimbo,
Regardless utterly of lash or limbo,
He thus began—"Hail! brother of the sun,
The solid earth, the sky, the briny ocean!
Hearing of your august eccentric notion,
I've hither journey'd on the wings of light
To win this pearl of exquisite delight,
This gentle princess for my gentle wife,
To whom to dedicate my future life."
"Thy name, Sir Stranger," quick exclaimed the king,
"Know'st thou the cost of failure in this thing?"
"I know it all—the doom and the reward,
For name, your highness has it on my card."
"Tell it," rejoined the king, "thy kin and kith——"
"Sire, I'm an orphan, of the name of Smith,
A name ennobl'd, and great king I come
From regions westward—from the town of Brum."

To him, the king—"Great Stranger, kiss our hand,
We like thy presence, and we like thy land;
We get our wares from thence, our pots and pans,
Our tea pots, coffee pots, our mugs and cans,
Our buttons, buckles, fishhooks, lines and flies,
Our guns and sabres, pins, and hooks and eyes,
And much of more that merit our attention,
And much, perhaps, too frivolous to mention,—
Such things as toys, which, though beneath our station,
Are something to our rising population.
We hope to have thee for our lawful son,
So let thy task be well and featly done,
Or woe the while, our sovereign behest
We may not change—thy head—thou know'st the rest.
My lords and knights, no further hints I'll throw out,
Conduct our guest below to get a blow out."

Now see the court arrayed, a splendid show
Of lords and knights and ladies all a-row,
Each watching with a strained and anxious eye
Two members of that goodly company.
That sweetly bright and beautiful young girl,
Just like a blush rose sheltered in a pearl,
Sat pensive with her hand beneath her cheek,
Looking her wishes. If those looks could speak
These were their words:—"Thou bravest of them all,
And fonder lov'd, may Venus stretch thy tongue
To woman's length and give me thee to call
My loving lord. Take from me all of mine,
And Fate may leave me speechless evermore;
Add what is power of tongue in me to thine,
So that from thy inventive lips may pour
A never-ceasing, never-ending story;
Talk, till my royal father, old and hoary,
Step from existence to the quiet vault.
Darling Improvisatorè, never halt
Until the goal be won, or death to me
Shall come, dear love, if it doth light on thee."

Our hero, Smith, whose Christian name was Sam,
Heard all she thought, through that mysterious agency
Which Mesmer taught, and which some think all sham;
But Truth's not truer than the soul's affinity,
And straight our hero, with the tenderest glance,
Pierc'd through and through with Love's delicious lance,
The heaving bosom of his soul's divinity,
And thus began,—
"Great King, once on a time—"
"What time?"—
"Ah! there's the rub; for that, no matter."
This story don't indulge particularities,
You see I stand upon a broad foundation,
And speak of any time and any nation.
(I wish my friend out there would hold his pother
And not exhibit his peculiarities
In this dissembly)—
Once upon a time
A land was threatened with a heavy curse
Of barrenness, there could not be a worse
In times protective, inasmuch no grain
Could fill from foreign ports the empty garners
Of home—a thing indifferent to farmers.
Anticipating this most sad event,
The thousands mused, and to't the thousands went,
And built a store a million miles in space,
Of height, and breadth, and width; and when they'd done,
The busy thousands went to work apace
One morning early, and by set of sun
This storehouse filled they with, for hosts unborn,
From floor to roof, some million sacks of corn.
This work no sooner done, oh! gracious King,
Than fell the curse, and every living thing
Smote suddenly. On man, and bird, and beast,
Death held for many a day a general feast.
And then there came a darkness in the air,
Black darkness, darkness black as dark despair,
And covered many million miles around;
And when it vanished, everywhere was found
Locusts deep crusting every rood of ground.
Look where you might you saw this mighty hive,
Writhing and heaving, everywhere alive.
Now mark what followed—this, O, Pagan king—
One insect from this swarm, one dusk-winged thing,
Within this storehouse takes his shimmering form,
And forthwith comes,—what with? one grain of corn!
Another follows suit, and yet another,
A father, mother, sister, yea, a brother,
Uncle, aunt, cousin, probably no kin,
Successively this storehouse stalks within.
And so from morn till night and night till morn
Each insect fetches forth, ONE GRAIN OF CORN.
In another, and another comes,
One at a time thus led on, then another,
This time perchance a father and a mother,
In slow deduction from the mighty sums
Bestrewn yards deep all o'er the fated land,
Revealing not a glimpse of grass nor sand,
Revealing not a shred of vegetation,
Nor slightest vestige of existent nation.
Within the mighty granary another
Dark insect stalks—this one perchance a brother,
Bearing his well-poised grain, and straight another
Forth from the swarm appears—this one a mother;

The sex denoted by a narrow, pale,
Blue streak of light descending to the tail.
Another enters, exits, then another,
Like Macbeth's ghosts, in line, one after 'tother."

The king leap'd up from apprehensive doze
With flashing eyes, whilst a dull hectic rose
On either cheek. "Sir Stranger," loud he cried,
"We'll pass thy locusts, and at once decide
Thy storehouse drained of every grain of corn;
So—on with what ensued, or next year's morn
Will see no end to this most prolix tale."
"Nor shall it, Sire, and that I may not fail
In this my best endeavour to convey
What every locust did from day to day,
How patient each of this vast insect swarm
Did, without thwart or squabble or alarm,
His or her work allotted, where's the charm
Of story-telling?
Sovereign, one by one,
I must especialize this insect work,
Until the long and weary work be done.
Nor will I this my avocation shirk.
And now, sage monarch, note the waste of time
Marked by our locusts. We are in arrears;
Some scores have passed within and passed without.
Minutes when multiplied sum up to years.
Patience, great king, and hear the story out.
Back to some fifty locusts must we turn,
Each having borne his special grain of corn.
First of that fifty to the garner went
Upon his earnest errand, earnest bent,
Another and another, him, or her;
We've idled opportunity to note
The sexual bearing, and must hence devote
A bitter heed. Another, long and slim,
Doth patient follow close, without demur.
These creatures have not human way and whim:
Each worketh quietly, in patient turn,
Each bearing its allotted grain of corn.
Another and another, yea another,
Perchance two sisters and a younger brother."
Hist? hark! What sound is that? By Jove, a snore!
The King had slid in slumber to the floor,
And there he lay, and lo, the courtiers all,
Fat, bearded generals, pages lithe and tall,
Young and old virgins—twenty and four score,
Together joined in loud unceasing snore.

"Wake up his Majesty!" But see, behold,
The blue-eyed princess, with her locks of gold,
Is sleeping in the storyteller's arms.
Up starts the king, and rueful looks around.
"I'll hear no more!" he shouts. "I'm done! I'm brown'd!
Here, Brummagem, come hither, take my child,
My queen, my court, my manors, lands, and farms.
Take all, and take thy leave whilst I am mild;
Brave not my rage—or, if thou list to stay,
Thy head's unsafe if ever from this day,
I hear aught more of that infernal yarn."

ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH.

THE BISHOP AND MR. SEDGWICK.

ONCE again St. Alban's, its priests and its congregation, are under a cloud. On the last occasion it was owing to a letter from the curate that the then Bishop of Manchester inhibited Mr. Sedgwick, and now the present Bishop of Manchester feels called upon to interfere on the representation and request of a quondam member of the choir and of a very prominent member of the congregation. These two gentlemen have been "telling tales out of school." The circumstances are briefly these:—During Mr. Sedgwick's absence, one of his assistant curates, rightly or wrongly, suspended a member of the choir. Mr. Sedgwick on his return confirmed his curate's decision. The offended member thereupon writes to the Bishop, and in his letter refers not merely to his suspension, but also to the general ritualistic practices in vogue at St. Alban's—practices, by-the-by, in the use of which he himself had aforetime delighted, and of which he most certainly never had complained. The prominent member of the congregation before referred to, with whom the disciplinarian curate had never been a favourite, also writes a letter to Canon Anson, the Archdeacon of Manchester, invoking the exercise of his very powerful archdiaconal functions. The result is that the Bishop and Mr. Sedgwick have an interview, and Mr. Sedgwick having explained certain circumstances, departs in peace, gratefully feeling and acknowledging the kindness of his diocesan. At the Bishop's request, the two curates are also bidden to visit him, and these two gentlemen receive a fatherly admonition.

Here all ought to have ended, but here the venom of the letters began to produce its deadly effect. The charges made were so serious, and the evident indiscretions—to use the mildest term—committed were so great, that the Bishop, though naturally averse to "informers," felt compelled to put not only Mr. Sedgwick, but the whole congregation to penance—the former for having committed them, and the latter for having connived at them. In short, the Bishop has decreed that for the future the "use" at St. Alban's shall be strictly in uniformity with the "use" of Manchester, *i.e.*, the Cathedral.

To us who know St. Alban's, its strength and its weaknesses, the righteousness of the verdict is beyond all question. When the late Bishop persecuted Mr. Sedgwick the public generally was not slow to express its sympathy. People generally could not help drawing comparisons between the immunity extended to the sins of omission on the part of a neighbouring resident-at-Southport-all-the-week Rector, and the harshness shown to the hard-working, self-denying curate of St. Alban's. And public opinion so far won the day that Mr. Sedgwick's inhibition was removed. Now, however, it will be very different. Slowly and stealthily creeping on, the services and the public teachings at St. Alban's have almost assimilated themselves to those of the St. Alban's, Holborn, type. They have become more un-English, more un-Anglican every day, and while disgusted at the means used to provoke the Bishop's rod we must rejoice at its application.

While admitting that the church in which Mr. Sedgwick ministers professes to confer upon its priests special priestly functions, such, for instance, as that commonly termed "the power of keys," most certainly as a matter of discipline it does not encourage habitual auricular confession. We are in no mood to discuss the subject of auricular confession, but having carefully considered the matter, the mind of the Church of England seems to us to run thus:—For all ordinary occasions the General Confession and the Absolution which follows it are amply sufficient to meet all Churchmen's wants. The tender beauty and completeness of their language is felt by many outside the Church's pale, and it is only on extraordinary occasions, such as deathbeds, or after the commission of deadly sins requiring special reparation, that auricular confession is to be practised. Then, too, confession is to be made "to some learned and discreet minister," not to any stripling and often indiscreet priest who may happen to be on duty.

To the congregation the monotony of a mere Manchester Cathedral service will be a sore trial. Black stoles will look funereal after the bright and varying colours which their eyes have so lately feasted on; but since by their encouragement of Mr. Sedgwick in his vagaries they have indirectly brought him his present fetters, it is but fair half the punishment should fall on their shoulders. The people of this diocese, of all persuasions, so implicitly believe in the Bishop, that appeal from his decision will be vain. Already the Bishop has given to St. Alban's church moral but silent support, and in return the congregation are bound not to transgress not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of the Anglican church.

Mr. Sedgwick, we understand, has left the city for the south of England. Whether he will ever return to the church which owes its existence to his labours, is a question which must be left to the development of events, and is an issue which we cannot pretend to foresee.

PLACARDS AND CONTENTS.

THE *Sphinx* placard perpetrated a somewhat "wild absurdity" three weeks ago. It gave its very largest type to the smallest paragraph in the journal. It announced in the biggest letters an article on Mr. Sothern, and the expectant purchaser found in the paper only half-a-dozen lines. A correspondent, who tells us he has bought every issue of our paper and of the periodical which for eighteen months preceded it, sends us an indignant remonstrance, and adds that others were equally dissatisfied with the large promise and meagre result. The simple explanation is, that the blunder was committed by the compositor to whom the "setting" of the placard was entrusted, and who, disregarding marks and directions, chose to exercise his own judgment as to which of the articles *ought* to be the most prominent and important. Neither the editor nor the publisher was cognizant of the proceeding. Our correspondent, in the whirlwind of his indignation, talks about "clap-trap," and "humbly submits that you (the Editor) will best serve the interests of the *Sphinx* by abandoning this sort of trickery." To which we venture to reply—with the evidence of four years' labour to support our assertion—that, with perhaps two exceptions, no journal in England is less amenable to the charge of "trickery" and "clap-trap" than the one in which these lines appear.

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RUSSIAN FUR SEAL JACKETS, SIX GUINEAS.
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Finest Imported Marsala.....20s. per doz.
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The best and safest remedy for coughs; relieves the difficulty of breathing in Asthma. To be had from most respectable chemists and confectioners, in 3d. and 6d. boxes; or, direct from he depot.—HETHERINGTON, wholesale confectioner, 18, Lower Mosley Street, Manchester.—7lb. parcels carriage paid to any part of the kingdom.

JUST ARRIVED FROM PARIS, viâ Belgium, a Large Consignment of FRENCH CLOTHES, in various colours. Will be sold 30 per cent below the market price, by CHAMBERS & CO., Army and Navy Clothiers, 24 and 25, Old Millgate, Manchester.

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R. G. UNDERDOWN, General Manager.
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SACRED MUSIC,
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Tuesday evening, December 27th, at Eight o'clock.
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Wednesday evening, December 28th, at Eight o'clock.
Thursday evening, December 29th, at Eight o'clock
Friday evening, December 30th, at Eight o'clock.
*Saturday afternoon, December 31st, at Three o'clock.
Saturday evening, December 31st, at Eight o'clock.
*Grand Juvenile Fete, terminating in time for the Juveniles to see the Pantomimes.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24th, AND EVERY EVENING,

To commence with the Grand Oriental, Pictorially Ornamental, Burglarly Transcendental, Gorgeously Magnificent, Quizzically Comic Christmas

PANTOMIME,

ENTITLED THE

FORTY THIEVES!

DEMONS.

ORCHOBRAND—a demoniacal money-lender he was; but, ah! "no matter" ..... Mr JAMES CRAIG
WRIT—his attendant sprite ..... Mr HARKER
I O U—terms too well known to need an explanation ..... Messrs POUNDS, SHILLINGS, and PENCE

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ALI BABA—"Reduced to poverty by circumstances over" &c., now a *woodcutter*, and consequently a good *feller* ..... Mr G. K. MASKELL
GANEM—his son, with a *love* for Morgiana, and a *soul* above work ..... Miss MAY BURNEY
MORGIANA—niece and maid of all work to Ali Baba, with a partiality for Ganem ..... Miss MARIAN MEADWAY
COGIA—Ali Baba's weak sup-*porter*, and his better *half-and-half* ..... Mr BRODERICK
CASSIM—Ali's brother, "but no more like his brother," *vide* Shakespere ..... Mr G. HAMBLIN
ZAIDE—his gentle spouse, not given to talking, "thro' being a practis' as I couldn't hold with, as the sayin' is" ..... Mrs F. B. EGAN
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THIEVES, FAIRY NYMPHS ..... By a Numerous and EFFICIENT CORPS de BALLET
DEMON IMPS, GUARDS, REAR-GUARD, WATCH-GUARDS, &c., &c. ..... By an immense number of Intelligent SUPERS, we beg their pardon, we mean

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Scene 1.—ORCHOBRAND'S OFFICE. (Louis Edouard.) Orchobrand on Commercial Morals, Writ on Swindles, and Abdallah on Acceptances—The Bargain and "Revenge" Ha, Ha.

Scene 2.—THE PERI GLEN. (Louis Edouard.) Meeting of the Fairies and Active Debate—The Sudden Storm and Zadie's "precious pickle."—FLORAL BALLET, principal Solos by Miss EUGENIE ALLNUTT.

Scene 3.—INTERIOR OF ALI BABA'S HOUSE. (S. Rogerson.) Ali's Poverty and Ganem's Wardrobe—The Domestic Donkey their entire Ass-etts—Departure of Ali and Ganem—Cogia's *distress* and expected *distraint*—Arrival of Cassim and Zaide—Cogia's Mistake and Morgiana's Wit.

Scene 4.—THE WAY TO THE FOREST. (J. F. Hughes.) The *Babi(e)*'s in the Wood—Ganem, not liking *chopping* proposes *changing*—A Case of Mistaken Identity, and Arrest of "Edward."

Scene 5.—THE ROBBERS' CAVE. (J. F. Hughes.) Appearance of the Demon and his-crew—*A screw* loose with Abdallah—ENTRANCE OF THE FORTY THIEVES. GRAND PROCESSION AND BALLET FANTASTIQUE.—The Rival Rogues, the Quarrel, and Disclosure of the Magic Secret.

Scene 6.—ALI BABA'S HOUSE. (S. Rogerson.) Cogia's *cogi*tation, her deep despair—Timely arrival of Morgiana—Triumphant entry of Ali and Ganem—Unwelcome ditto of Cassim and Zaide, they put their *heads* together, frightful *Konk*-cussion and dreadful *Konk*-lusion.

Scene 7.—CLUB-HOUSE OF THE FORTY. (Louis Edouard.) The Thieves' Supper. *Gorge*-ous effect—Abdallah's *Speech*—Sudden appearance of Orchobrand, Abdallah speechless—Awful Disappearance of Cassim—The Vows of Vengeance.

Scene 8.—EXTERIOR OF BABA'S MANSION. (Louis Edouard.) Ali's stupidity, Hassarac's cunning, and Morgiana's ingenuity—Touching *love*—Scene terminating in a touching *glove* scene—Terrific Combat—Vice triumphant—Virtue nowhere.

Scene 9.—CORRIDOR IN BABA'S HOUSE. (H. Bickerstaff.) Opening on to the Garden—The dual Serenaders—*The Jars*—The Discovery—Morgiana to the Rescue—Virtue triumphant—Vice-*Vice* Versa.

Scene 10.—VERANDAH IN BABA'S HOUSE. (Louis Edouard.) Abdallah in Luck—Hassarac's despair—Defeat of the Robbersby Morgiana—Last appearance of Orchobrand and Settlement of Affairs by the Fairy Queen—General Smash up, Breakdown, and change to

Scene 11.—**GRAND TRANSFORMATION.** (J. F. Hughes.)

REGIONS OF BLISS.!

Clown ..... **Mr. GARDNER BOLEN**
Harlequin ..... **Mr. EDWIN JAMES ALLNUTT**
Pantaloon ..... **Mr. LEWIS BASTOW**
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Scene 1.—TOY AND ARCHERY WAREHOUSE AND ARMY AGENTS.—Galop....Harlequin and Columbine. Hello!—Here we are—Slap, Dash, Crash—Clean your boots—Army Reform—Smart Young Men Wanted—Clown in love—Sudden Appearance of the "Dark Man" Dressed in Blue—Dreadful Murder by the Clown—"Police! Police!"—"It's All My Eye!"—Russia Sauce, Scotch Toys, and English Toys—A Maiden all forlorn—A Kick-up in the Highlands—Meeting of Britannia and America—The Great Question Settled by Clown—May England and America go Hand-in-Hand with Peace and Plenty—Off we go to

Scene 2.—Dr. BIRCH'S ACADEMY AND PLAYGROUNDS.—Sailors' Hornpipe....Harlequin and Columbine. Clown and Pantaloon arrive and commence their Gambols—A Present for a Good Boy and a Present for a Good Girl—Clown and Pantaloon at their Old Tricks—"Who Shot the Dog?"—"Police! Police!"—A Regular Flare-up—Sudden departure to

Scene 3.—FASHIONABLE TAILOR'S, OUTFITTER'S, AND LOAN OFFICE.—Polka....Harlequin and Columbine. Clown Measured for a Coat—"A stitch in time saves nine"—Tailors Make a Man a New Clown Suit—A Loan Left Alone—Terrible Fate of One of the Division—"184 B of all men else I have avoided thee!"—A Regular Row and a Regular Swindle—"Who Broke a Window?"—"I know where you live!"—"Police! Police!"—Reward of Roguery, and Sudden Termination in the POLICE STATION.

The Comic Business Written and Produced by Mr. GARDNER BOLENO.
Scene Last.—THE FAIRIES' HAUNT.

The Opening Written expressly for this Theatre ..... by Mr. JAMES SHEPLEY
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HARLEQUIN

DICK WHITTINGTON

AND HIS TREASURE OF A CAT!

Written expressly for the Theatre Royal, Manchester, by J. STRACHAN, Author of "Sindbad the Sailor," &c., &c., &c.

Hugliolastik .....(A *stock-art-ish* character, quite as bad as his name bespeaks him).....Mr. C. COOPER
Gambogia.....(An *ochre-ish* individual, of limited proportions—known in certain circles as the *Yellow Dwarf*! But hush).....Mr. DAMPIER
Cupid....(The beau (arrows and quiver included) for the ladies, making many *hits* among the *misses*; afterwards changed into a "*love* of a cat.").....Miss A. SAGORY
Eglantina.....(Queen of the particular tribe of Fairies enlisted in Whittington's cause).....Miss F. BENNETT
Dick Whittington.....(A rising youth, of whom description is unnecessary).....Miss E. D'ESTE
Bobby Neverswet.....(Dick's fellow apprentice—an unformidable rival).....Mr. H. TAYLOR
Alderman Fitzwarrenne.....(A *more* than *common counsellor*; merchant of the City of London, and master of Dick and Bobby).....Mr R. ATKINSON
Alice.....(His only daughter, "an uncommon nice young girl," young Dick's darling).....Miss ZERBINI
Dame Griddlechop.....(Housekeeper to the alderman, and aunt to Bobby).....Mr. GOODING
Jem Sacktill, Bill Keepitup, Tom Goitboys.....(Roystering apprentices, Bobby's companions)
Alec Skyeblew.....(An early milkman).....Mr NEWLAND
Captain Jack Bower.....(A true blue and elegant skipper).....Miss EVAH HAMILTON
Tackling, Ropesend, Masthead, Binnacle, Windlass.....(Members of Captain Bower's shipping company unlimited.)
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Veri Hi Kokilaurum.....(Emperor of Morocco, troubled with rats).....Mr F. BARSBY
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Baboo Ketchup Plunderten.....(Chief cook and bottle-washer to H.I.M.).....Mr. A. BRUCE
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The WATTEAU SCENE by Mr. FINLAY. The SCENERY by Messrs C. BREW, C. SMITHERS, MUIR, FINLAY, W. TELBIN, and W. TELBIN, Junior.
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(C. SMITHERS.)

Somewhere near Van Demon's Land)—The Enchanter and the *diminutive yellow-boy*, a *little sufferin'*—Hugliolastik's prescription—The Secret Treaty—Cupid, king of hearts, a *trump card*.

FAIRY GARDEN, A LA WATTEAU.

(FINLAY.)

The fairies' assembly-rooms and nightly quadrille party—Cupid *linked* with the *catty-nation*, being changed to a pretty pussy, who departs to share Whittington's fortune.

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The runaway Apprentice, and his Midsummer Night's Dream.

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(C. BREW.)

"Early in the morning"—The dame opens out on Dick, and the boys open out the shop—P-r-r-retty Alice and p-r-r-retty Dick—Counter attractions—The "tableau of industry," over the left—The triumph of force over the right—The apprentices bound to the sea.

CLOUDLAND.

Hugliolastik raising the wind—The elements! The storm!! The wreck!!!

THE RAFT.

(W. TELBIN, Jun.)

Safety of Dick, Captain Bower, and the Cat.

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(W. TELBIN, Jun.)

The "Adventures of Whittingson and his Cat," half-bound in Morocco—Gambogia's suit not of a good standing colour—It won't wash—Muster of the Amazons—The Yellow Guard *mustered*—Grand *assault*, and general *peppering*.

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(W. TELBIN, SEN.)

The Dwarf a *double Glo'ster*, yet not quite the *cheese*—The compact broken—The Emperor's *authority* powerless against Hugliolastik's *rein*.

ALHAMBRA INTERIOR IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE.

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The happy return, and general Distribution of rewards. The Cat and the Rat King!

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(C. BREW.)

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(C. BREW.)

The Yellow Dwarf changed to a Bobby—Bobby changed to a nobby swell—The Alderman changed for the worse—Dick and Alice unchanged—Attempted exchanges defeated—All changed by the Fairy Queen.

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